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Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5608th meeting

Friday, 22 December 2006, 10.40 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Al-Nasser	(Qatar)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Third report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (S/2006/922)

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06-67916 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Third report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (S/2006/922)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Netherlands and Sierra Leone, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Majoor (Netherlands) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the third report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, contained in document S/2006/922.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2006/1012, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1734 (2006).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption by unanimity of resolution 1734 (2006). It widely recognizes the huge steps that Sierra Leone has taken over the past few years, and in particular over the past 12 months since the last United Nations peacekeeper left and the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) was established under resolution 1620 (2005).

Only a few years ago, Sierra Leone was the site of Africa's most gruesome civil war. Over the past 12 months, in comparison, Sierra Leone has continued to move forward. A strategy for reforming the civil service has been finalized; judicial and security sector reform continue; the armed forces and police have increased their capacity and professionalism; refugees have returned home; and steps to improve human rights have been taken, notably through the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission.

Crucial to reconciliation and the establishment of the rule of law has been the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and in particular the detention and forthcoming trial in The Hague of former Liberian President Charles Taylor. That sends a clear message that there is no impunity. It also underlines the importance of a regional approach.

Over the next 12 months, the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone, with our support, must be consolidated and continued. There is still a mountain to climb. Adult literacy stands at just 35 per cent. The probability of living until the age of 40 is only 47 per cent. There are three physicians per 100,000 people, and 50 per cent of the population suffer from undernourishment and live on less than $1 a day.

So, in the next year we see three priority areas: first, the fight against corruption; secondly, civil service reform; and thirdly, the development of clear policies and strategies, in particular to tackle youth unemployment, to tackle poverty and to generate economic development.

The year 2007 will be a milestone year for Sierra Leone. July's presidential and parliamentary elections will be crucial towards building a successful, sustainable democracy. All parties in Sierra Leone must demonstrate their full and unconditional commitment to a full democratic process. International support will be vital. To that end, the resolution temporarily increases the number of military and police advisers, to enable the Office to support the election process without having to cut back on its work elsewhere. It also calls on the Secretary-General to conduct an assessment of UNIOSIL's role closer to that election date, so that, as Sierra Leone makes a transition towards sustainable and peaceful economic development, that can be properly handled.

That process will be reinforced by the longer-term international attention and support to be provided by the inclusion of Sierra Leone, at its request, on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Security Council should work closely with the Commission to benefit from its advice as we move forward. So, the participation today of the representative of the Netherlands is very welcome, and we congratulate him on his appointment as Chair of the meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone.

I should like to highlight the particular need for further work within Sierra Leone on implementing resolution 1325 (2000). Gender inequality remains a serious problem, yet women's empowerment is central to peace consolidation and good governance. There is a particular need to ensure that women are able to participate fully in the 2007 election, both as electors and as candidates, as called for in today's resolution. A gender perspective should be taken fully into account in implementing the mandate we have agreed upon today. I look forward to the next Secretary-General reporting to the Council on an action plan agreed upon with the Government of Sierra Leone in order to implement resolution 1325 (2000).

Sierra Leone is a country close to the heart of the Secretary-General, as well as to his home in Ghana. So, it is particularly appropriate that this should be one of the last resolutions adopted by the Council during Kofi Annan's tenure as Secretary-General. From Sierra Leone to the Sudan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Secretary-General has demonstrated a tireless commitment over the past 10 years — indeed, over his professional lifetime — to building peace and prosperity in Africa and to calling upon nations to protect those whose national Governments cannot do so. Africa and Sierra Leone are better places thanks to his efforts, and so is the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, who will address the Council in his capacity as Chair of the meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): Upon requests by the Government of Sierra Leone and the Security Council, the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission last June selected Sierra Leone to be one of the first countries to be considered by the Peacebuilding Commission. I very much welcome this opportunity to inform the Council about the discussions undertaken in the two country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone which took place in the framework of the Peacebuilding Commission on 12 October and 13 December 2006. The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Organizational Committee, Ambassador Gaspar Martins of the Republic of Angola, who chaired the first country-specific meeting, has shared with the Council the Chairman's summary of the most recent meeting.

Allow me to highlight some key outcomes of our discussions both last week and during the first country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, important achievements have been made to date in restoring peace and stability and promoting post-conflict recovery. This was highlighted during both country-specific meetings. The Commission welcomed the efforts of the international community in supporting the Government in developing and implementing the various strategies: the poverty reduction strategy, the medium-term expenditure framework and the peace consolidation strategy. Members stressed that all peacebuilding efforts should be linked to the existing strategies under the leadership and ownership of the Government of Sierra Leone. Members and the Government of Sierra Leone agreed that specific challenges under four critical areas need to be addressed: social and youth empowerment and

employment; consolidating democracy and good governance; justice and security-sector reform; and capacity-building.

Sierra Leone was declared eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund. It is expected that a country envelope of approximately $25 million can be made available as an initial contribution. Members urged the international community to ensure an adequate level of external assistance and to lend support to the Government of Sierra Leone to broaden its donor base and secure assistance, including further debt relief. Members called on the international community to provide adequate resources and support for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections, including capacity-building to ensure the equal participation of women in the electoral process.

In order to bring the discussions and the activities within the country-specific meetings on Siena Leone forward in months to come, the following was decided. First, the Peacebuilding Support Office is to present a calendar of ongoing and planned peacebuilding-related activities in Sierra Leone.

Secondly, the Chair of the country-specific meeting for Sierra Leone is to develop, in consultation with members, a work plan with a clear timeline and division of responsibilities for actions to be undertaken by the Government, the United Nations system and other stakeholders in preparation for the next country-specific meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Thirdly, a follow-up meeting of the Commission on Siena Leone will be held in March 2007. It will review actions and progress in the realization of peacebuilding goals and priorities, the effectiveness of international assistance and ways to enhance that assistance.

Finally, upon the invitation of the Government of Siena Leone, members will consider the possibility of a visit to that country before the review.

In conclusion, I wish to underline three points. First, the discussions within the framework of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone have clearly demonstrated members' intention to use the Peacebuilding Commission to the benefit of the countries under consideration, in this case Sierra Leone.

Secondly, our most recent meeting built on the first country-specific meeting in narrowing our focus on the areas that require additional investment — financial and otherwise — to allow Sierra Leone to build a sustainable peace that can prevent it from relapsing into conflict. In this process, the Government of Sierra Leone has made a commendable effort to highlight the gaps that need to be addressed.

Thirdly, in spite of the Peacebuilding Commission and its country-specific formats being a novelty without thoroughly tested working methods and procedures, it has become clear that all members, and the Government of Sierra Leone itself, engage actively in its discussions. There is an acute awareness of the potential of the Peacebuilding Commission for the countries under its consideration and of our responsibility to exploit it to the fullest. In that context, I wish to thank the members of the Security Council for their continued support for the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, including through the resolution the Council has just adopted.

It is my conviction that with the fruitful meetings that have taken place, we have laid the foundation for a comprehensive approach to post-conflict reconstruction and development in Sierra Leone. We have also laid the basis for a strong partnership between the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community. It is the deepening of that partnership in a spirit of transparency and dialogue that will help to define the Peacebuilding Commission as a useful body that can make a difference to the process of consolidating peace and development in Sierra Leone.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.